(e) whether there were protests during the exercises at the venue; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The United States Air Force (USAF) has flown its F-16 aircraft for the first time in India during the Indo-US Joint Air Exercise.

(b) Twelve US Air Force F-16 aircraft have participated in the exercise.

(c) To learn and benefit from the philosophy of operations followed by both the Air Forces and to update procedures and concepts of Airborne Warning and Air Control System (AWACS) operations.

(d) The actual expenditure incurred on the exercise is Rs. 21,20,000/- (Rupees Twenty One Lakh Twenty Thousand only).

(e) and (0 Some protest rallies were organized by the Left front at Kolkata and Kalaikunda on 4th, 5th & 7th of November 2005. However, adequate security arrangements had been made.

MiG CRASHES

775. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of MiG-21 and MiG-29, Air Force aircraft that have met with accidents during the last three months; month-wise;

(b) the total number of lives lost as a result thereof;

(c) the total financial loss suffered by Government as a result of these accidents; and

(d) whether Government are considering to put such aircrafts under the shadows for ever; and if not the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The Indian Air Force has lost one MiG-21 in an accident during the last three months; on 26th October, 2005. There were no accidents of MiG-29 during this period.

(b) One Pilot sustained fatal injuries in the accident.

(c) A Court of Inquiry (Cot) has been ordered which is in progress. The loss will be known only after the finalisation of the Col.

(d) Phasing out any aircraft, including MiG aircraft is as per the phase out plan on the basis of the Total Technical Life or Calendar Life of the

aircraft or whenever these become operationally unsustainable due to various reasons.

Mandatory HIV test for JCOs and other ranks

776. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the defence headquarters proposes to make HIV test mandatory for those who want to become Junior Commissioned Officers and other ranks in the army;

(b) if so, when it is likely to be implemented; and

(c) whether all army centers are equipped with HIV testing facilities?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) A proposal to make Human Immuno deficiency Virus (HIV) test mandatory for new entrants into the Army is under consideration.

(b) No specific time-frame can be indicated.

(c) All the Army Hospitals are equipped with HIV testing facilities.

Increase in Aids cases amongst Indian soldiers

†777. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is an increase in the cases of AIDS amongst Indian soldiers;

(b) if so, the number of soldiers who died of AIDS during the last two years and the number of soldiers infected with the said disease at present;

(c) whether any action plan has been made by the Government to make soldiers aware in this regard so that they can remain safe against this disease; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) There is no increase in Human Immuno deficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) cases amongst the Indian soldiers. Government has made in action plan to make the soldiers and their families aware about HIV/AIDS. Some of the activities undertaken in this regard are as under:—

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.